

Nearly 200 People Attend Basic SKYWARN Classes Over A Two Day Period

By: Erik Heden

The National Weather Service in Binghamton, NY held two basic SKYWARN classes on back-to-back days on May 19th and 20th. To increase participation in the classes, the Binghamton office partnered with WSTM Channel 3 in Syracuse and WKTV Channel 2 in Utica, along with advertising the class through local newspapers, NOAA Weather Radio, Facebook and the office homepage. The first class was held in Syracuse, NY and was set to take place at the studios of WSTM until a huge response from the public caused the location of the class to be moved to a local high school. General forecaster Erik Heden said, "The response was overwhelming. We went from around 12 people signed up to 75 in a matter of two days." Around 150 came to the class in Syracuse, which was a record attendance for the office. Edward Lindberg, a resident of Syracuse attending a SKYWARN class for his first time said, "I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about my passion. Audience participation was encouraged and Erik Heden's enthusiastic mentoring was palpable and contagious to all that were present." Chief Meteorologist Wayne Mahar from WSTM Channel 3 broadcast live from the school for his 5, 5:30, and 6 p.m. newscasts.

On the second night, about an hour east of Syracuse, a second class was held at the newly opened Training Preparedness Center in Oriskany. Morning Meteorologist Bill Kardas and weekend meteorologist Jill Reale from WKTV Channel 2 were in attendance. In addition to promoting the event during their newscasts and on their Facebook page, WKTV did an interview with General Forecaster Erik Heden during their noon newscast the day before the event. A total of around 50 people came to the class in Oriskany.

Both classes provided an opportunity, not only for adults to attend, but for children and young teens interested in learning more about the weather. Upon their departure from the Basic Skywarn course, many of the adults as well as the young people commented and praised the presentation showing their excitement about this opportunity. Commenting that they couldn't wait to sign up and attend an advanced course, and those interested in studying weather in college trying to decide which college would be the best one to go to study meteorology. The variety of the audience was impressive with retirees, teachers, middle school students, amateur radio, and local law enforcement well represented.



General Forecaster Erik Heden explaining how to submit reports to the office via email. East Syracuse-Minoa High School. East Syracuse, NY. Photo Courtesy Administrative Support Assistant (ASA), Patricia Douglass.



General Forecaster Erik Heden answering questions during a break. A slide detailing how to contact the office via an 800 number to report severe weather was left up during the break. East Syracuse-Minoa High School. East Syracuse, NY. Photo Courtesy administrative Support Assistant (ASA), Patricia Douglas.



General Forecaster Erik Heden explaining how to use the website to get products. Preparedness Training Center. Oriskany, NY. Photo Courtesy Candy Paris, Rome Observer.



General Forecaster Erik Heden explaining how lift, is one of the three ingredients needed for thunderstorm development. Preparedness Training Center. Oriskany, NY. Photo Courtesy Candy Paris, Rome Observer.